



**FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**September 25, 2024**

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK  
RCUD 2024 OCT 17 PM1:03

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Colin Veitch, Brian Monroe, Stephanie Pickup, Nicole Pacheco, Brendalee Smith, Erik Andersen

**STAFF PRESENT:** Superintendent Tara Kohler, Assistant Superintendent Mark Balestracci, School Business Manager Nicole Potter

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Veitch at 6:31 pm

***Approval of Minutes:***

Motion to approve regular session minutes from September 11, 2024 made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Ms. Pacheco, approved with one abstention being Mr. Andersen (5-0).

Motion to approve executive session minutes for content only from September 11, 2024 made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Ms. Pacheco, approved with one abstention being Mr. Andersen (5-0).

***Report of the Student Advisory Committee:***

Mr. Fin Reynolds reported to the Committee that the Fairhaven High School (FHS) Open House will be coming up, the clubs and sports are well underway. He also stated the Battle of the Classes Hockey Fundraiser will be coming up in October.

***Public Comment:***

Mr. John Dallen addressed the Committee about his concern regarding the alleged bullying going on at Elizabeth Hastings Middle School (EHMS). Ms. Heather Skrutski also spoke to the Committee about her concern on how alleged bullying is being handled at EHMS.

***Reports and Recommendations of the Superintendent:***

***Updates on Clubs & Advisors:***

Superintendent Kohler stated she is excited to see more activity with the new clubs, etc., as well as more staff stepping forward to advise. Assistant Superintendent Balestracci stated we are continuing with the Enrichment Program again this year. It will begin on October 7th. He stated we are trying to refresh the sessions and make them a little more exciting, unique, and innovative. He is excited about the numbers and is hopeful more staff will come forward to offer programs that they are passionate about. Mrs. Pickup asked if members of the community can volunteer as well. Superintendent Kohler stated they would have to be vetted, and be supervised by a staff member, but the details can possibly be worked out.

***Elizabeth Hastings Middle Schools Recognized as a United School:***

Superintendent Kohler introduced Mr. Kyle Alves, Principal at EHMS. Mr. Alves told the Committee that EHMS was recognized for the second year in a row as being a United School because of their involvement in Unified Sports and the Special Olympics. Superintendent Kohler stated how exciting it is to see the children at the Unified Games get involved in the sports. She also stated the crowd at the Unified Basketball games are larger and more excited than ever before.

***Update on East Fairhaven Elementary School:***

Superintendent Kohler updated the Committee on the fire that occurred at East Fairhaven Elementary School (East) on September 22, 2024. The fire took place around 8:00 pm. The Fairhaven Fire Department were notified via an alarm that went off in the school and responded immediately. Thanks to their quick response we were very lucky to keep it contained. She went on to say that three classrooms were affected by the smoke and soot and will be closed off until further notice. Those classes have been relocated in the school by Mrs. Wendy Weidenfeller, Principal of East. The investigation is ongoing. The District will take this time to identify other things to improve as far as fire safety.

***DESE Accountability Update - Fairhaven High School, School of Recognition:***

Superintendent Kohler shared the exciting news that FHS has been named a DESE School of Recognition. This is the first time FHS has received this award. Only 57 schools in the Commonwealth receive this recognition, and we are one of only 14 high schools that received it this year. It is based on many reasons, one being closing achievement gaps for all students, but they took a special look at closing gaps of the most chronically underperforming students.

Mr. Andersen asked Superintendent Kohler for an MCAS update. She stated she will have that information next month.

***Upcoming Events:***

Next School Committee meeting will be October 16, 2024 at 6:30 pm.

A Special Town Meeting will be held November 19, 2024 at 7:00 pm.

- Superintendent Kohler reminded the Committee that we have two articles at the Special Town Meeting. Police Department money going into the IT budget for a part time IT Police Department Technology position. And also recouping the additional Chapter 70 money the District just received of \$118,030.

***New Business:***

A motion was made by Mr. Andersen to award Rock Solid Construction the contract of \$188,169 for Phase II of the Leroy Wood School Playground Project, seconded by Mr. Monroe, approved (6-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to award MDM the contract of \$386,000 for EHMS Gymnasium Wall Project, seconded by Mr. Andersen, approved (6-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to award IMG Corporation the HVAC Feasibility Study for \$95,000, seconded by Mr. Andersen, approved (6-0).

***Questions from individual Committee Members:***

Mr. Monroe stated he has checked the Fairhaven Public Schools website and the Bullying Prevention Plan and Incident Reporting forms are up to date for anyone that may need to access them.

Mr. Andersen asked about the bus issues that were taking place. Superintendent Kohler answered that it had to do with policy specific to K-2 and they are taking a look at it at the District level. It is being addressed.

A motion to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body and chair so declares was made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mr. Andersen, roll call vote, approved (6-0).

Adjourned at 7:11 pm.

*Sheri Souza*  
Secretary to the School Committee  
Fairhaven Public Schools

Approved, October 16, 2024